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Water Supply Outlook Deteriorates

Latest forecasts from The National Resources Conservation Service and the National Weather Service show well below average conditions for the Pacific Northwest.

The **composite snow index** for the Columbia above Grand Coulee Reservoir is 52% of average, identical to the 1977 value; for The Dalles, it is about 52%.

Two critical upper basins - the Canada and the Kootenay - typically contribute 43% of the average flow at The Dalles. Their snowpack percent of average was 54% and 46% on Mar. 1.

Seasonal precipitation, Oct. through Feb. continues to reflect the dry winter pattern. Seasonal amounts are 56% above Grand Coulee, 72% over the Snake River drainage and 58% for the Columbia River above The Dalles.

For the entire Northwest the winter precipitation period, Dec. through Feb. is the second driest on record dating back to 1895 - - only the winter of 1977 was drier.

Runoff during the winter months has been near the record low. The adjusted runoff, in million acre feet (MAF) for the Columbia River at The Dalles Dec.- Feb. was 9.8 maf, or 54%, equaling the second lowest flow of record dating back to 1928. This winter, runoff is lower than the drought year of 1977 when the runoff was 10.64 maf for the same period.

The NW River Forecast Center continues to forecast **streamflows** throughout numerous areas of the NW in the lower decile representing the lowest 10 percent of the historical record. Streamflow forecasts in the Columbia River mainstem above Grand Coulee are between 71 and 77% of normal.

The forecast at Grand Coulee for the Jan. - July period is 37.6 maf, about 59% of the 1961 to 1990 averages; for the Columbia River at The Dalles it is 58.6 maf, or 55% and compares to 53.4 maf in 1977.

CURRENT SITUATION

Pool Elevations (Approx. in feet)

	3/31 Flood Control	Today
Libby (CoE)	2448	2388.6
Dworshak (CoE)	1582	1505.2
Grand Coulee (BoR)	1283	1223.1
Hungry Horse (BoR)	3555	3493.8

Reservoir Operations

The Technical Management Team agreed to implement the following operations for the week:

The system is on refill to the extent feasible.

- Outflows from Dworshak Dam continue at 1.3-1.5 kcfs.
- Libby Dam remains at minimum outflows of 4 kcfs.
- Hungry Horse Dam maintains minimum outflows of 2.5 kcfs.
- Grand Coulee Dam outflows are being maintained to avoid drafting below 1220 elevation while meeting power loads.
- Outflows at Bonneville Dam are averaging 115-140 kcfs for base power operation. Chum operations ceased Mar. 16.

Megawatt Summary

For the week ending Mar. 20, Federal generation was 1.02 million MW-Hrs per week, with 6,067 average MW. Corps generation was an average of 4,588 MW, or about 41% of available capacity.

Drought Management Team Formed

Representatives from federal agencies and the four Northwest states have teamed up to coordinate a response to expected drought conditions this year in the Columbia Basin. They hope to reach agreement on individual and coordinated actions for programs, funds and authorities that may help mitigate drought impacts.

Check these sites for more information on drought, snowpack, precipitation and reservoir operations.

<http://enso.unl.edu/monitor>, <http://www.nwd-wc.usace.army.mil>,
<http://www.wcc.nrcs.usda.gov>, and <http://www.nwrfc.noaa.gov>